



STAYING IN FOCUS

THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XI, NUMBER 2

APPLICATIONS OF FOCUSING

MAY 2011

MEET THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE BOARD

NOTES FROM MARY

Today The Focusing Institute (TFI) spans the world geographically with 1,800 members from 43 countries, and Focusing is being applied in a large range of fields, from sophisticated universities in Japan to the rural poor in Ecuador.

While our work expands globally we also take care of our internal organization to match our global outreach and training efforts. And we are engaged in a planned transition process to a structure which does not depend on Gene or me.

Gene and I as members of the Board would like to thank the current Board for the tremendous energy they have and continue to put into TFI.

When something needs doing, there is an easy formation of a team to work on it. The inclusion of Elena (Argentina), Akira (Japan), Astrid (Germany) and Pat (Pakistan) gives us new perspectives.

All of the Board members give their time on a volunteer basis, out of love for Focusing and the desire to keep it growing around the world. We hope you will enjoy getting to know them.

Mary

AND FROM GENE

I think we have a wonderful Board. I am glad we are now introducing the members to all of you. Knowing who they are should make your participation with us easier and more humanly welcome.

Hello from Gene.



JOAN KLAGSBRUN, CERTIFYING COORDINATOR, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

Interview conducted by Dionis Griffin, Focusing Trainer, North Carolina, USA

What is your background in Focusing?

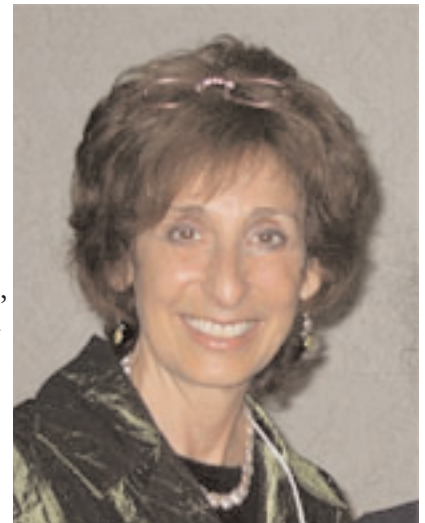
I first discovered Focusing in 1976, when I met Gene in Colorado at the Naropa Institute. I went on to be trained by him in New York, and that experience became a turning point in my personal and professional life. I became passionate about integrating Focusing into my work with clients, and with students. At that time (and to the present day) I was a psychotherapist in private practice, and also an Adjunct Professor in Counseling Psychology at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Also, through facilitating Changes Groups and teaching at international conferences, I have been honored to introduce Focusing to thousands of people who knew little or nothing about it.

And how long have you been on the Board?

I have been on the Board for approximately 12 years, and it has been fascinating to participate in the Board's evolution. In the late 1990's, we met only twice a year, in Gene's NYC apartment. The Board consisted of Gene, Mary, Mary McGuire, David Rome and myself. Now the Board has expanded to eleven people. We meet for at least two hours every month by telephone; a great deal of work happens via email in between monthly meetings. In 2006 we added a yearly two-day retreat, which has been our practice ever since.

Is it different meeting by phone and meeting in person?

Well, talking by phone is efficient and far more practical; it enables us to hear from members across many different time zones. But talking in person enables us to tackle more sensitive, nuanced areas, and to have more give-and-take. And the retreats, while challenging to arrange, are immensely worthwhile. Our next one will take place in New York in May, right before the International Conference in California.



What other changes have you experienced on the Board?

Recently, the Board has formed three functional committees. A functional committee crosses the idea of a functional whole with the more common use of committee, to be a fluid coming-together of people with a common interest. Any member has the freedom to step down when he or she wishes. The Board elicits contributions from any coordinator, trainer or board member who is interested in one of three topics: (1) the TFI website (2) international functions, and (3) coordinator support. Each functional committee works a bit differently, since form follows function, but in each one a) the group meets monthly by telephone, b) one person facilitates the meeting, c) the members attend for as long as they are interested, and finally, d) minutes are taken and emailed to all who have indicated interest. In the case of the coordinator gathering, all the coordinators are sent minutes so that they can stay abreast of what is happening, whether they were able to attend the phone meetings or not.

Is there one of these functional committees that interests you particularly?

I have a particular interest in the coordinators monthly telegatherings. For me, TFI coordinators are the lifeblood of the Institute and form our Senior Advisory Board. The Coordinator Discussion List on the internet is an important way that communication takes place. It seems vital that Coordinators can give input on any of the four functional committees. It's my feeling that the Coordinators will increasingly be making more of the decisions.

What other contributions have you made to the Board?

I am proud of the success of the first FOT (Focusing-Oriented Therapy) World Conference that I organized with Melinda Darer in 2009 as a fundraiser for TFI. This was the first time that FOT therapists came together as a group, and there was much collaboration and connection in the stimulating and joyful few days we spent in community. The second FOT World Conference will take place this fall, November 9th-13th, 2011 with the theme of "Living the Practice."

Do you have any further thoughts?

I am honored to be part of a Board where the dedication, generosity, and creativity of fellow members is so high. I am proud of the range of issues we have tackled, including having gotten our finances in order so that we can apply for grants to fund some of the projects our members have started on a shoestring. And I am touched each and every time we read or reference the Vision Statement, which we do, often. I will quote only the final point:

TFI will have achieved its purpose when Focusing is woven into the societal fabric world wide enough so that there is no longer a need for any central international organization. Like literacy is becoming today. A basic life skill wanted and taught at all levels in all countries. This will help change the nature of interpersonal relating, social structure and government.



REVA BERNSTEIN, COORDINATOR, CALIFORNIA, USA

In 1979, when the Focusing Institute consisted of a desk and a file drawer in the office of Gene Gendlin's two small rooms at the University of Chicago, I volunteered to work closely with Doralee Grindler, the Institute's first director. It was there we organized the first classes to teach people how to teach Focusing. Gene Gendlin, Jim Iberg and others from the Chicago Counseling and Psychotherapy Center taught the classes. Akira Ikemi of Japan and now a member of the Board, was studying at the U of C, and he participated as a student, as did I. There are many from those early days that continue to be actively involved with the Focusing Institute.

The Board was established when the Institute achieved non-profit status in 1986. I was invited to join the Board in 2005. Today the Board takes a more active and visible role in the direction of the Institute. The minutes, which are first submitted to the board for approval, are published on the website. (See focusing.org/contact_us.html)


For example, in one of the minutes, Nada Lou's project proposal is recorded. The Board invites such proposals. I spearheaded forming a group through our coordinator discussion list to discuss and refine the proposal, which was for creating an acknowledgment of an intermediate partnership proficiency. After one and a half years of discussion and thought, the Award for Proficiency in Focusing Partnerships, was created and approved.



Of course, Gene is adamant that Focusing projects NOT be limited to the 'imprimatur' of TFI. In 2009, this Diversity Statement was approved by the Board (see focusing.org/contact_us.html): "...the Focusing Institute takes as a core value the principle that the practice of Focusing, how it is taught by certified Focusing teachers, and its application in different fields will not be standardized. Diversity of approaches will be protected. Constructive critiques among Focusing Trainers or between TFI and individuals presenting or applying Focusing are welcome and should be offered by means of open, respectful communication."

Also Mary Hendricks-Gendlin keeps the Board aware that Focusing should never be confined within rigid structures. Robert's *Rules of Order* is not used during our meetings. We don't make motions or second them. We don't vote. We pause so that we can make all decisions the Focusing way, this is, freshly, each time. Again, the Diversity Statement says it well. "Focusing is a practice that honors what arises freshly in the moment. Frozen structures of any kind are antithetical to the ethic of Focusing."

Does this take a lot of time? Often yes. But I don't get frustrated. I say, "It takes as long as it takes." I feel honored to be a part of the on-going development of the Focusing Institute, which I've seen grow over the last thirty years from a small seed to a well-rooted organization with branches spreading out into the world.

What do I contribute? I wonder, since I've retired from actively teaching Focusing. Then some member of our wonderful Board tells me that they appreciate my presence. My "presence"--my ability to simply "be with" issues and with other members--my deep appreciation of the process--this is what Focusing teaches, isn't it? 

ASTRID SCHILLING, CERTIFYING COORDINATOR, KOLN, GERMANY

It has now been almost four years, since Gene and Mary invited me to join the TFI Board. So I want to take a moment to share what this invitation, this expression of trust/confidence / *Vertrauen* touched in me.

First of all there is a deep 'Yes!' alive in me, a yes to a global connecting of people who share the values of embodied listening and who share the gift of pausing sensitively so that a fresh, liberating living forward can come.

It is this possibility of sensitively pausing...and allowing a sense of the whole of any human situation to form, that can shift stuckness in culture, dogma or tradition, in everyday routines, patterns or trauma. It is this possibility that still ignites my motivation to serve, in sharing Focusing. The pausing helps me in a very real way to sense enough inner space and enough grounded being to write these lines now from a curious-insightful place in me, while I also feel a shyly anxious heart pounding in the face of going public.

Mary Hendricks-Gendlin called it the Revolutionary Pause in her keynote at the 15th International Focusing Conference. "When a person can pause and go inside and say, 'What is my sense of this situation?' that is the thing that makes us less vulnerable to oppression."

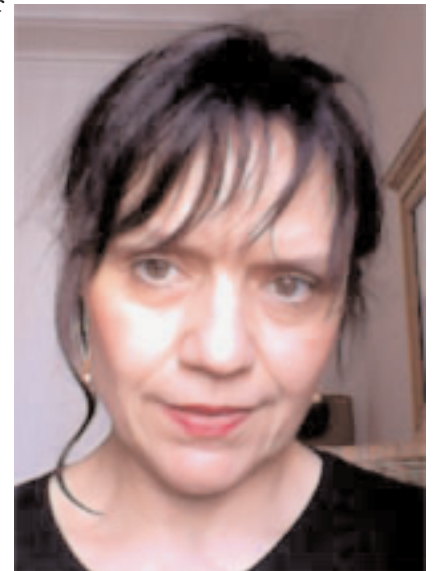
The Revolutionary Pause had a deep impact on me, and there is no Focusing training that I teach without referring to it.

So here I wish to share, what I see is the most essential purpose of TFI. It is working towards making a "felt sensing literacy," or a "felt-meaning-making literacy," (from the Vision Statement on the TFI Website--see "contact us") accessible on a global level.

The working of the current Board, I see in this context. It is all about how to create spaces, fluid workable structures, that help carry forward from this felt sensing level, even when our founders are not available any more and even when we ourselves are gone.

One major instance of that was our creating the "Diversity Statement," which David Rome worded after a long, deep exchange on our Board retreat in November 2008. We agreed that a diversity of approaches to teach Focusing would unconditionally be protected.

Another kind of diversity I care about is how we as Certifying Coordinators organize ourselves. At this point, I wish for TFI to support each individual CC as we discover what feels right to us in our various situations. That might be co-organizing in regional or national associations, or in local centres; it may be just staying connected to TFI and to each other. I hope we will develop workable structures, so that we can develop different ways side by side.



Different ways to teach Focusing side by side can be challenging when it happens at close proximity, as well as when neighbouring colleagues or students wish to become Coordinators. All that besides our unique human intricacies may sometimes bring misunderstanding or conflicting perspectives. What I care about is that we can nourish ourselves enough to keep listening and talking to each other through these sensitive situations.

Holding the question in my heart: how can we live and offer within our own community, what we as Focusing professionals offer to others? How can we hold the space open for communication even in difficult times? The idea arose in me to have a pool of people, and I found support right away in the CC meeting in Montreal. It took two years for the “International Support Team for Ways of Fluid Conflict Resolving” to emerge in March 2010. We now are 16 people from ten countries each offering their unique way. You can find the team on the Website. Janet Klein, co-founder of Interactive-Focusing and my mentor for many years supported the project right from the start and so I dedicated our work to her memory.

Astrid will write about her work with the International Functional Committee in a later newsletter.



HARBERT RICE, NEW MEXICO, USA

Based on an interview conducted by Dionis Griffin, Focusing Trainer, North Carolina, USA

Harbert Rice joined the Board in the fall of 2009 and attended his first retreat last year. Already he is called a “moving force,” because he keeps the Board’s decision process moving forward. As he puts it, he tries to sense and articulate (in a Focusing way) what might be a next step for the Board and the organization. For example, he suggested and has led the effort to make the Board’s actions and discussions more transparent by writing and publishing a summary of the Board’s monthly minutes on the Institute’s website, found under “Contact Us” or “About Us.”

Surprisingly, Harbert started his career as a research biologist. His first private venture was spent disseminating environmental information to major utilities. Fascinated by personal computers and with a taste for entrepreneurship, he founded his own company—a publishing house for computer software books. The sale of his company a few years later gave him the financial freedom to pursue a different direction, that of a volunteer.

Turning to his Quaker roots, Harbert volunteered with a Quaker Prison Project, Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) near his then home in Reno, Nevada. This volunteer group of six facilitators gave non-violence workshops in the Nevada State Prison (NSP), training inmate facilitators and leading to a process where inmates taught inmates.

Not too surprisingly, Harbert became interested in NVC (Nonviolent Communication). At the same time, he was keenly aware of Focusing—his wife, Rebecca Mueller, is a long-time Focuser—and he became interested in the resonances between Focusing and the Quaker practice of seeking the “the Light within.” He read Gene Gendlin’s *A Process Model* and took Nada Lou’s TAE course during the Focusing Summer School.

During Nada Lou’s course, Harbert used TAE to make explicit his sense of the close relationship between Focusing and NVC. This theoretical exploration led to collaboration with Beatrice Blake, who put Harbert’s theory into practice in El Salvador by using NVC as a first step in teaching Focusing (see “Staying in Focus” Vol. V11 Number 3, September 2007). In 2008 he published a small book (available through TFI) called *Language Process Notes*, which sets out the “resonances” in the language used in Quaker, Focusing, and NVC practices.

Harbert met Mary Hendricks-Gendlin at the International in Montreal in 2006, and they remained in contact. At some point Harbert asked, “How can I help?” which led to his call to the Board.

When comparing Quaker-led to Focusing-led volunteer service, Harbert noted that the group process in Focusing is not yet fully developed and articulated. Because a Focusing-type group process is not typical of Western practices, everyone has to unlearn much of what they have learned about working in groups. For instance, many groups feel they have arrived if they make decisions by consensus. But making decisions with felt-sensing means going beyond consensus.

With consensus, everyone gives consent, but often people have unexpressed reservations. By contrast, the



Focusing way of “sensing the whole situation” encourages everyone to work towards the “sense of the group.” When a small step is taken, or a decision is made, then all need to experience an energy shift (although perhaps not all at the same time) as the group’s direction and movement become clearer. In practice, this means that the group looks for and senses where the energy and shifts lead rather than following a rote agenda. For the Board and the organization, the direction is towards more openness, transparency, and collaboration with the wider Focusing community.

Website: Harbert serves on this new functional committee, which has sensed that the Institute needs to clearly envision the goals of the new website before making any further detailed decisions.

Finances: Harbert helped Melinda Darer prepare and apply new computer tools to manage income and expenses. Also, the Institute now has the donated help of a professional fund-raiser!



ROSA ZUBIZARRETA, FOCUSING TRAINER, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

Interview conducted by Dionis Griffin, Focusing Trainer, North Carolina, USA

How did you get to know Focusing?

Very slowly! I was introduced to Gene’s book in 1995, and three years later took a Level One Course from Ann Weiser Cornell. I also attended a great Changes group. Yet while Focusing felt very natural and nourishing for me, I did not initially seek further training. I sensed that ultimately my “calling” had to do more with groups than with one-on-one work.

In the spring of 2000, I was introduced to Dynamic Facilitation (DF), a new approach to working with groups. I was fascinated to see that with DF, a mixed group of corporate executives and social change activists could, after a surprisingly brief period of time, be listening to one another other with genuine openness and interested curiosity. I went on to study DF in depth, which led me back to school for a degree in Organization Development.

A few years later, while attending a “Treasure Maps” course with Ann and Barbara, I had a profound experience of the affinity between the inner work of Focusing and the outer work of DF. The way we can listen to divergent “parts” inside ourselves, strongly parallels how we can listen to divergent perspectives in a group context.

And so I decided to deepen my study of Focusing by enrolling in a Trainer Certification program with Robert Lee. I completed my certification at the Focusing Weeklong in 2006, led by Robert Lee, Jim Iberg, and Doralee Katonah.

When did you join the Board?

In February 2008 I was invited to facilitate a Board Retreat. I was invited back to facilitate the November Retreat. Early in 2009, Pat Omidian, Harbert Rice, and I were all invited to join the Board.

How do you use Dynamic Facilitation (DF) to facilitate Board meetings?

DF encourages creativity within a group context. As we know from Focusing and TAE, the fresh, emerging “green shoots” of creativity need to be protected in order to flourish. DF is like a greenhouse; it gives these tentative creative shoots a chance to grow. Of course, my work is evolving into a crossing between DF and other practices, with a particular emphasis on Focusing.

What happens if there’s only five minutes left to meet, and a decision must be reached?

So much depends on what has happened during the first fifty-five minutes. Often, the time invested in listening deeply to the various perspectives, leads to greater ease in arriving at shared “next steps” later on. As Mary McGuire says, “When every ‘I’ is heard, a ‘we’ can emerge.” At the same time, it helps to know at the beginning of a meeting what decisions need to be made--and what the fallback is, if no agreement can be reached by a certain time.

You also teach DF?


Yes, and I wrote a “how to” manual, available at the DF website ([http:// www.tobe.net](http://www.tobe.net)) To make DF more accessible, I am happy to share the electronic version of the manual at no cost with anyone who is willing to offer some feedback on their experiences with this method.

What challenges do you and the Board face?



I see us in the midst of a significant transition, where a shared goal is to have TFI better positioned to make an even greater difference in the world. There are many projects that we would like to do, that will require additional staff, additional resources, and new levels of organization..

At the same time, we want to create ways of organizing ourselves, that still honor the hallmarks of our Focusing process. It's inevitable that we will make some mistakes along the way. What is important is that we are able to learn and grow from those mistakes.

It also seems that the more we accomplish, the higher we set our sights and the more we try to do. This is great! At the same time, we need to pause from time to time, to look back and appreciate how far we've come. 

AKIRA IKEMI, COORDINATOR, NISHINOMIYA HYOGO, JAPAN

Boy, did I hate arithmetic! How could something divided by zero become zero? What happens to this one apple when it is divided by zero, and becomes zero? "Come on, that's nonsense," I thought. In arithmetic class I always wondered if the reality I was seeing was real or a dream. I didn't know this was a serious philosophical issue until much later. I thought I was done with math for life when I enrolled in Psych 101 at Boston College. But I soon found I had to struggle with the square root of N again, because statistics were essential in psychology. I split right away, moving next door to the philosophy department. Eventually I ended up double majoring in psychology and philosophy. When I asked one of my profs where I could go for advanced study in both psychology and philosophy, she suggested I contact Professor Eugene Gendlin at the University of Chicago.

Gene invited me to come to a Focusing workshop. "What on earth is Focusing?" I wondered, but he let me in for free, so I went. The first time I saw Focusing, it was the most delightful, warm, gentle, moving and shocking experience for me. Gene's listening was smooth, warm, genuine, and yet the Focuser was changing, right in front of my eyes! How could such gentle listening be so powerful? It was a puzzle, but I surely wanted to get into this.

Actually, I learned most from Gene AFTER I graduated and moved to far away Japan. Often, the thought would pop into my mind, "What would Gene think of this or of that?" Then I would plunge into his articles.

Now, I am reading Gendlin's philosophy with Professor Naohiko Mimura (Kansai University, Department of Philosophy), a phenomenologist who studied Husserl and then got turned on by Gene's philosophy. Gene's philosophy excites me, and helps me see what's going on in my psychotherapy. I am a psychotherapist by profession and a professor of clinical psychology at Kansai University Graduate School of Professional Clinical Psychology. Focusing is exciting because it lets experience speak from itself. I am careful that I do not impose concepts on the client's experience. Also, I am careful that the client's experience remains the subject, not the object of any therapy method, including Focusing.

Focusing is wider than Focusing. It lets philosophy, spirituality, poetry, art, music, movement, therapy, healing and almost all human endeavors come alive. By that I mean it 'explicates' or brings to light, the implicit dimensions of experience. And vice versa. The symbols, thoughts, ideas, movements, art and so forth, bring us a new implicit dimension. Focusing brings novelty to everything we do!

How do we provide a space to hold all these diverse and different endeavors together? That's one issue on the table at the Focusing Institute.


Last night, or actually at 1:30 am, in my home near Kobe, Japan, I was on the phone (Skype) with my buddy David from college. He's in New York. While we're talking, a chat comes in from Rome, Italy. Trying to talk to David and chat with someone in Rome at the same time was quite a challenge. Then I see another incoming chat from my dear friend in California! Couldn't handle three at once! Crazy world!

But then I remembered, when I first moved to Japan, it took a week to get a letter delivered to Chicago. If Gene wrote back immediately (and that was not so usual), it would take another week for that letter to come to Japan---two weeks shortest, and one month normally, just to do one interaction. Now we're chatting and skypeing around the world, around the clock, for free! Everyone has become close with technology. So what does "interna-



tional” mean now? The borders have become so diffuse and yet there are language barriers too. I can send this article to Dionis in one second, and I don’t even know where she lives, USA? Greece?--it doesn’t matter. On the other hand, some people are going to spend many hours, translating this article into Japanese and Spanish. We depend on their good will and their strenuous efforts to cross this border. So the border isn’t there and yet it’s there. How can we be an “international” organization, is another issue I am dwelling on as a Board member of the Focusing Institute.

Personally, I have been in international situations since I was a child. I went to an international school for example. I know the negative meaning of international, too, which is the “tyranny of the English-speakers” in some instances. No, I don’t want to be a tyrant, but for many locals, the people that go to these international meetings look almost like tyrants. They speak English, which the locals don’t understand, and then decide on worldwide criteria which includes all the locals. I don’t want this negative meaning of international to come into the Focusing Institute and in my mind, I seem to be monitoring and checking, asking “What would the locals feel?” on each issue.

One angle on international is to think of its opposite, the regional. I remember using this oft-quoted phrase in one of the board meetings: “Think globally, act locally.” Trying to be ‘international’ might become superficial or even tyrannical, if we forget that each of us lives in a local region. I would like to know how each region in the world needs the Focusing Institute, and how the Focusing Institute can be of service to regional needs. Perhaps our membership structure is geared to North America. Are other structures possible? At the Focusing Institute Board, we have just started a small subcommittee, which I am heading, to study what our membership structure is like and how we might be able to think creatively of other membership structures, envisioning different ways with which people of different regions and different needs involve themselves with the Focusing Institute. The membership structure is already quite complex, with different fees for different regions, for example. But for all the arithmetic that it requires, I remain calm, trusting that computers today can multiply and divide. 

ELENA FREZZA, COORDINATOR, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

How did I come to know Focusing? My body was my guide. After many years of horrendous back pain, having tried all kinds of alternative help, physical and emotional, including unsuccessful back surgery, it was as if I had received a sentence from the doctors saying, “You have to learn to live with it.” I needed to find a kind way to be with me with all that pain, a way I could feel listened to, not criticized or looked down on. I needed to feel like Elena again; I had lost her somewhere in that pain, and that was the most painful thing of all.

The need to understand, listen to and be with human suffering, through my own suffering, grew in me as time went on, so I studied PCA (Person Centered Approach) Counseling. Getting to know Carl Rogers gave me back my hope in human nature and a way of being in a relationship with myself that was accepting, respectful, and gentle, yet powerful.

I was looking forward to attending the International Forum of PCA held in Brazil, August 1989. I was going to meet so many interesting people working from this approach from so many different countries. My pain and I went together, excited and happy! Then it happened. I met my dearest friend and teacher, Ann Weiser Cornell, who was presenting a workshop on Focusing!!! Something in me, maybe the part that always knew that the doctors were wrong, took me to that workshop, where I touched a place inside which I’d never visited before, and certainly not in such a tender and loving way.

My body said, “I want more of this!”

That’s how I started my training in 1990, when I went to New York where Ann was teaching Focusing Levels 1 and 2. I bought the tapes, translated them into Spanish and started teaching my colleagues.

That same year we founded the first PCA Counseling Center in Argentina, “Holos Centro Argentino de Psicología Humanística y Counseling.” By then I had been to Chicago, gotten more training from Mary McGuire and Janet Klein, two wonderful teachers and human beings, and went back home,



translated their exercises and handouts into Spanish, and started teaching my counseling students, gradually finding a way to adapt Focusing to our culture and learning a lot from my students and their body wisdom.

I finally met Eugene Gendlin at a weeklong in Chicago; I think it was 1992. I was so lucky. In those days he taught a lot and demonstrated, as he still does. I felt so honoured; it was like being with this genius, only to find he was the most loving, caring human being. My love and gratitude to him will transform my life and my country until one day the world will be ready to listen and understand his creation.

I finally found Elena again. Thanks to Focusing, I can find her when she gets lost and her body starts to hurt.

In 1992 our Center had an academic plan to present to the Education Ministry for their acceptance. I had managed to include the first two levels of Focusing in it and was teaching it openly, not only in the Counseling Center but to my group of professional PCA therapists. We were only a few in those days, like a family.

For five years we were inspected by the Education Ministry. I remember one time the inspector came by while I was teaching Focusing to a group, but instead of watching my interaction with the students, she joined in an exercise. During the sharing afterwards, she could not stop talking about what she had experienced. The hour was over; we needed to stop, but she went on and on; of course we got her approval and Focusing became official in our country.

In Argentina now, Focusing has developed in many areas: in communities and poor areas, with battered wives and micro-credits, in education and medical environments, in counseling, psychotherapy, creativity, and neuroscience and finally, with professionals who relate to the body in different ways. We had the first Ibero-American Conference in 2007 with 150 people and are starting to organize the First International Conference in South America, to be held in 2012.

Last year Gene asked me to be part of the Board saying, "I hope you accept." Isn't he incredible! How could I not accept such an honour, coming from him and from all the wonderful members whom I know and admire so much!!!

I am very new and still learning from the best teachers one could ever expect to have! Besides meeting once a month by phone. we are also meeting in New York before the International in Asilomar, CA! This will be my first retreat.

I want to say that I am deeply grateful for the work Gene, Mary and the Board have done all these years. I breathe Focusing in every meeting no matter how difficult or delicate the issues that come up. The listening is sooo Focusing, I always end with a big smile inside.

There is a lot to be done as a living and growing community. There is a wonderful implicit process to unfold together. I know that whatever decisions are made, are part of a caring Focusing process, and if something goes wrong, there is always the willingness to go over and over the matter until it feels right.



PAT OMIDIAN, COORDINATOR, KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Mary invited me to join the Board a couple of years ago. This is an honor but I often feel like I have the least experience. I started Focusing at the same time I started teaching Afghan refugees and Afghans in Afghanistan (2001), with an introduction to the process by Nina Joy Lawrence and then training from Ann Weiser Cornell. As I live in Pakistan, I am pleased to have the regular phone meetings with the Board because I only visit the US once a year. There is no perfect system for these conference calls since there are so many time zones to take into account. Furthermore, because of my workload over the past year I have been unable to attend any of the functional committee meetings and so I took a short leave of absence from the Board.

I am pleased that the Board now more closely represents the world of Focusing and is no longer so heavily American. I would like it to be even more international as the various worldviews are critical to our growth. I appreciate the sensitivity to the Focusing process that permeates all Board processes. There is a real desire by all of us to honor the vision of diversity, and that is reflected in how we, as a group, come to decisions.

In March, I rejoined the Board and have been looking again at the various



projects in which I have been involved. Below are two pictures of work in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The first is a picture from a workshop on Focusing and Psychosocial Support that was given in Multan, Pakistan, in the fall of 2010. The training was for local Pakistani leaders of NGO's working on flood relief, with prostitutes, vulnerable women, and people recovering from substance abuse of various kinds. They have since developed an Urdu manual based on that workshop for initial Focusing training. The Afghanistan programs continue with Nina Joy and me consulting from a distance.



To the left, workshop on Focusing and Psychosocial Support given in Multan. Above, our Afghan coordinator, Laila Masjidi, (right) runs programs on Focusing and Psychosocial training for schoolteachers in Afghan schools.



STAYING IN FOCUS

THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER
DIRECTOR: MARY HENDRICKS-GENDLIN
EDITOR: DIONIS GRIFFIN
DESIGN EDITOR: RICKI MORSE

A TRI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF
THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE
P. O. BOX 539, SPRING VALLEY, NY 10977
www.focusing.org